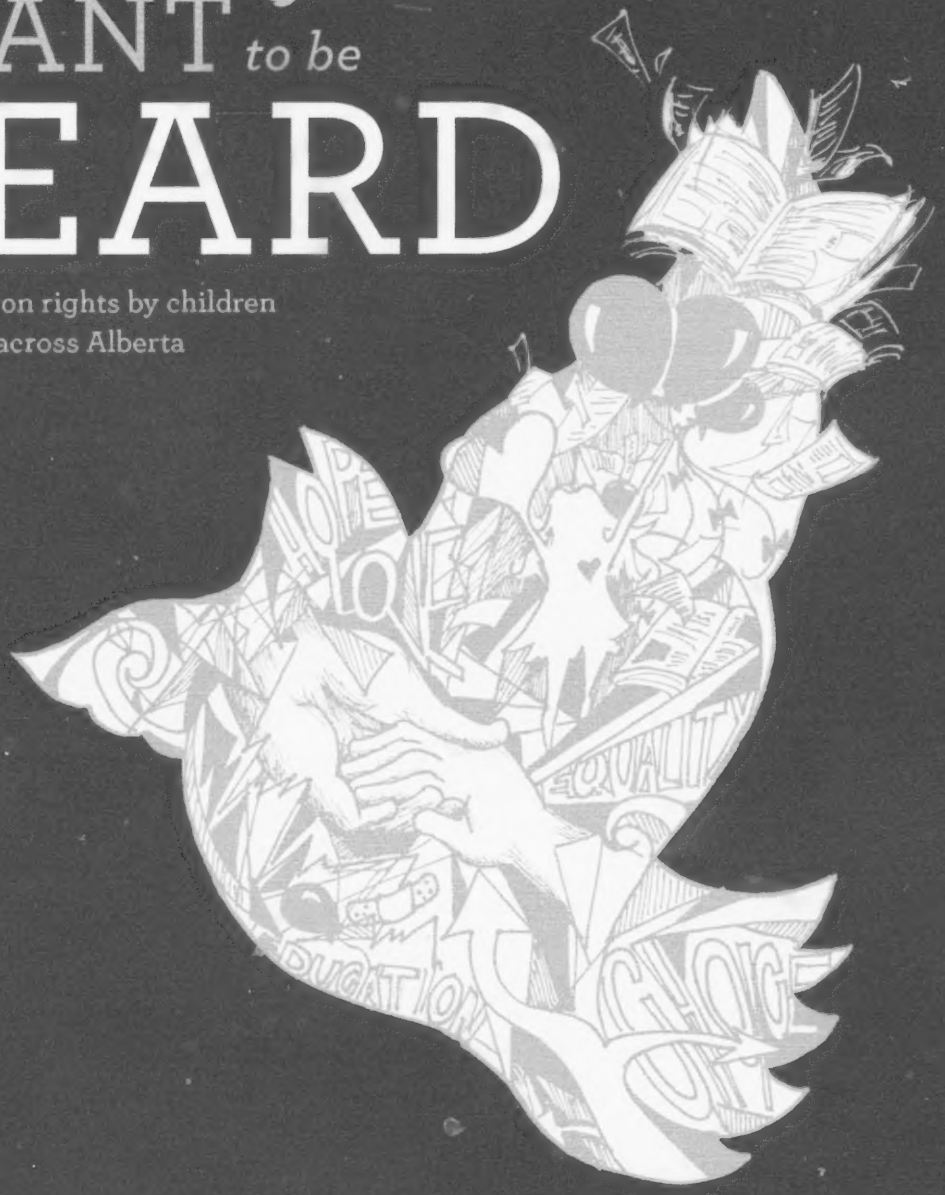
WE WANT *to be* HEARD

Art expressions on rights by children and youth from across Alberta



About the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate (Alberta)

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate represents the rights, interests and viewpoints of children and youth receiving services under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* (CYFEA), *Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act* (PSECA) and the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. The office provides individual and systemic advocacy, public education, and opportunities for community and youth engagement. We also offer legal representation for children and youth regarding CYFEA and PSECA matters.
For more information, visit **www.alberta.ca/advocate**.

To contact the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, call toll free **1-800-661-3446** for Advocacy Inquiries and **1-888-890-2020** for Legal Representation Inquiries. Or visit our website at **www.alberta.ca/advocate**.

National Child Day is celebrated across Canada to recognize the United Nations' adoption of two documents centred on children's rights: the *United Nations Declaration of Rights of the Child* on November 20, 1959, and the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* on November 20, 1989. The province of Alberta endorsed the Convention in 1999, and articles from the Convention are presented throughout this book.

An important part of my job is educating young people about their rights. To celebrate National Child Day in 2012, our office launched a provincewide art contest to promote the rights of children and youth. Through the theme "We Want to be Heard", we encouraged young people between the ages of five and 21 to submit pieces of art that reflected their feelings about child and youth rights. The office received over 350 wonderful submissions, some of which are being showcased in this book.

I encourage you to share this book with the children and youth in your life!

Sincerely,

Del Graff
Child and Youth Advocate

CAITLIN B. 11 years old

I have the right to have a home.

LUKE P. 6 years old

Scott W. 11 years old

> I think it is really important that we have rights. If we didn't, other people could do stuff to us and no one could really stop them.
>
> Kyle T. 12 years old

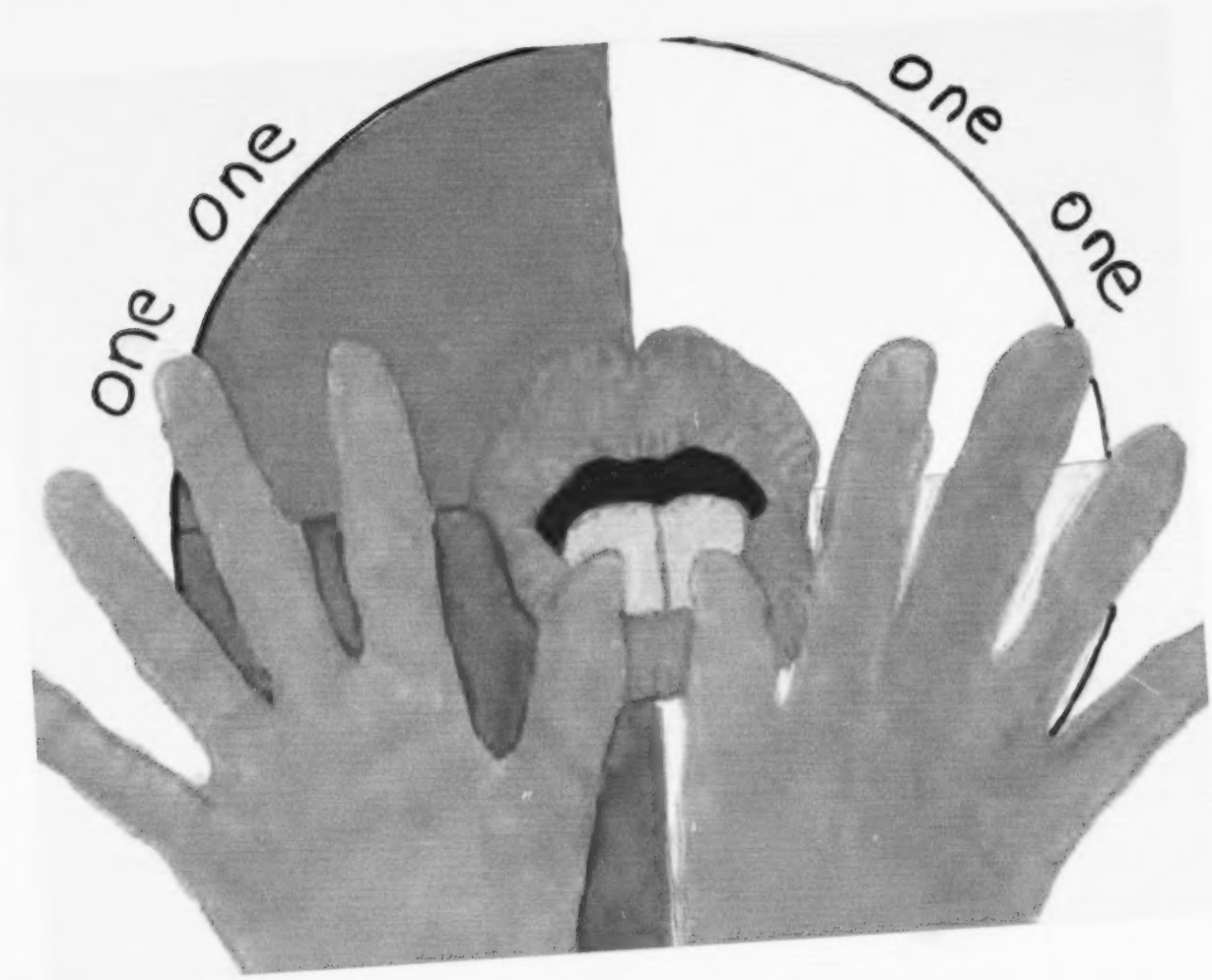
Article 1

Everyone under 18 years of age has all the rights in this Convention.

Article 2

The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.

ALICE B. 21 years old



CHANTAE M.S. 11 years old

> Kids should know their rights because if they don't, they could be mistreated and live an unfair life.
>
> MADISON D. 11 years old

Article 3

All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.

Article 4

Governments should make these rights available to children.

HAYDEN M. 6 years old

"I think it is important that people should get shelter and have a home."

MELANIE D. 12 years old

Article 5

Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to guide their children so that, as they grow up, they learn to use their rights properly.

Article 6

Children have the right to live a full life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.

THE RIGHT TO HAVE:
• A standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs
• A good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment
• A RIGHT TO LIVE A FULL LIFE
Convention on the rights of the child.
WE WANT TO BE HEARD

ANDREW L. 18 years old

WINNER

ANTHONY F. 17 years old

"Kids should have the right to play. It doesn't seem fair that they can't play. They should be able to have fun while they are young."

JASMINE R. 12 years old

Article 7

Children have the right to a legally registered name and nationality. Children also have the right to know their parents and, as far as possible, to be cared for by them.

Article 8

Governments should respect a child's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.

April C. 12 years old

CAITLINE C. 6 years old

EDWARD G. 11 years old

Article 9

Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good. For example, if a parent is mistreating or neglecting a child. Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might harm the child.

Article 10

Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact, or get back together as a family.

"I think it's important kids know about the CRC, so if their rights are denied they would get help."

JAYCEE W. 12 years old

HANNAH C. 17 years old

EMMA T. 14 years old

Article 11

Governments should take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally.

Article 12

Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account.

> Everyone should have the right to be with their family.

SHELBY B. 11 years old

I HAVE THE RIGHT TO: be heard · VOICE MY OPINIONS · have a dream · BE WITH MY FAMILY · TO STUDY · religious life · religion · Not be Persecuted · GOOD QUALITY HEALTH CARE · Play · BE TAKEN CARE OF · HAVE FRIENDS · Live with · BE RESPECTED · a home · HAVE A JOB · Education · LOVE ANYONE I WANT TO · be myself · achieve · and share information · be loved

WINNER

BEYATA H. 15 years old

HARMONY S. 15 years old

JILLIAN B. 16 years old

DANESSA M. 9 years old

WINNER

Article 13

Children have the right to get and to share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.

Article 14

Children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide children on these matters.

> Kids are more sensitive than adults, and kids don't have as much people to listen to them.

JEREMIAH D. 11 years old

HABBA M. 16 years old

> I think it's important that kids get a voice.

KARL W. 12 years old

Article 15

Children have the right to meet with other children and young people and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

Article 16

Children have the right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their family and their home.

CHELSEA H.R. 15 years old

I have the right to have a family.

JAINA M. 6 years old

JAYNNA G. 9 years old

WINNER

JONATHAN S. 15 years old

"You have the right to be yourself."

COLBY M. 20 years old

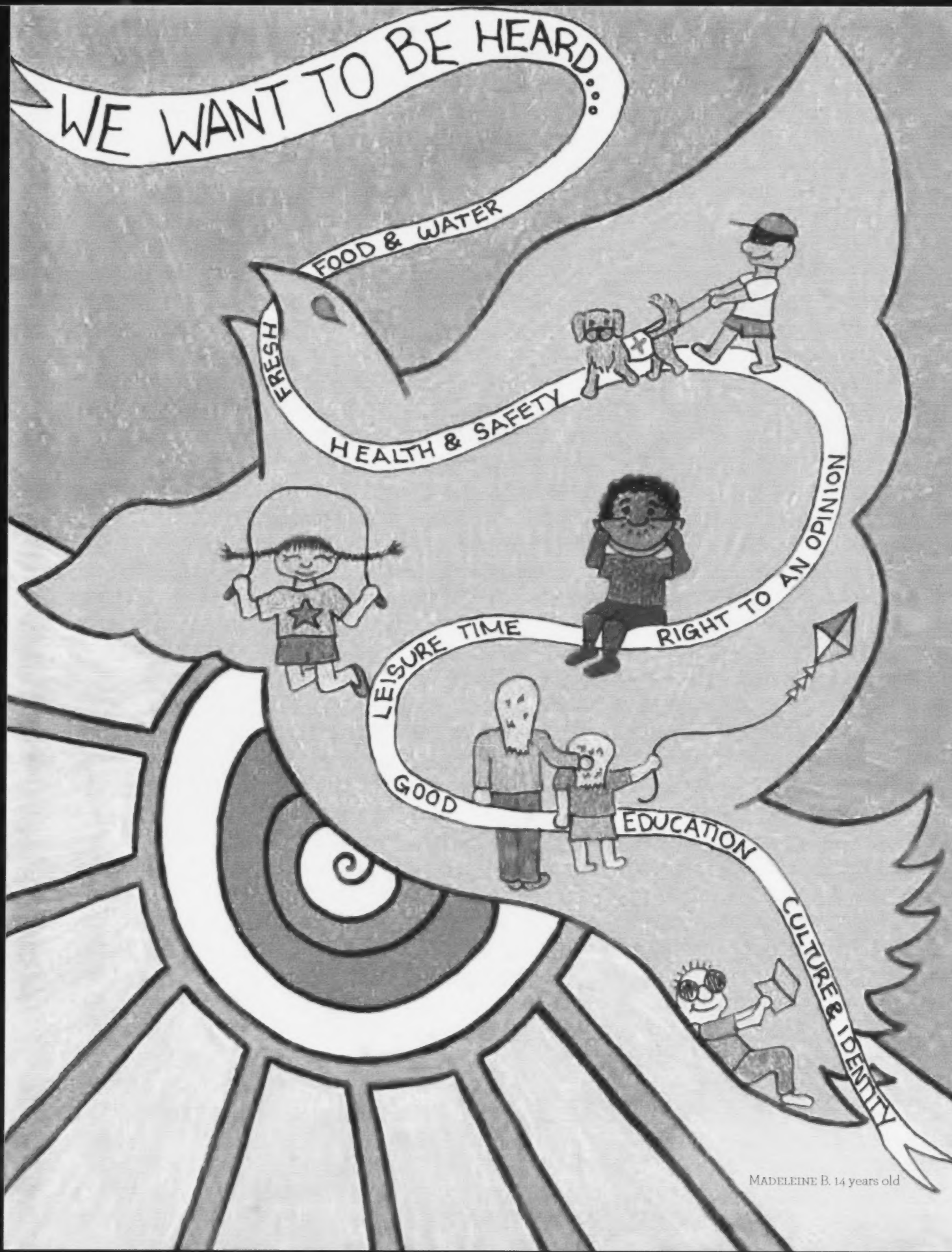
Article 17

Children have the right to reliable information from the media. Mass media such as television, radio and newspapers should provide information that children can understand and should not promote materials that could harm children.

Article 18

Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work.

JOANA C. 11 years old



MADELEINE B. 14 years old

MICHELLE F. 14 years old

Article 19

Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them.

Article 20

Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly by people who respect their religion, culture and language.

"Every kid has the right to use their voice to say what they need to say, every kid has the right to be who they are...to reach their goals, to have a home, to go to school, to be who they are and to seek what they're looking for."

CHELSEA B. 14 years old

MINHO J. 11 years old

> This art shows that voices cannot be silenced.

MARTINA C. 19 years old

Article 21

When children are adopted the first concern must be what is best for them. The same rules should apply whether children are adopted in the country of their birth or if they are taken to live in another country.

Article 22

Children who come into a country as refugees should have the same rights as children who are born in that country.

I WANT TO BE HEARD
LEARN
KNOWLEDGE IS POWER
Education is what matters.
A chance for us to acknowledge our right to an education, respecting our human dignity.

MELISSA H. 18 years old

WINNER

KAYLEE F. 9 years old

> Don't talk down to us, just talk with us. Listen and we will too.

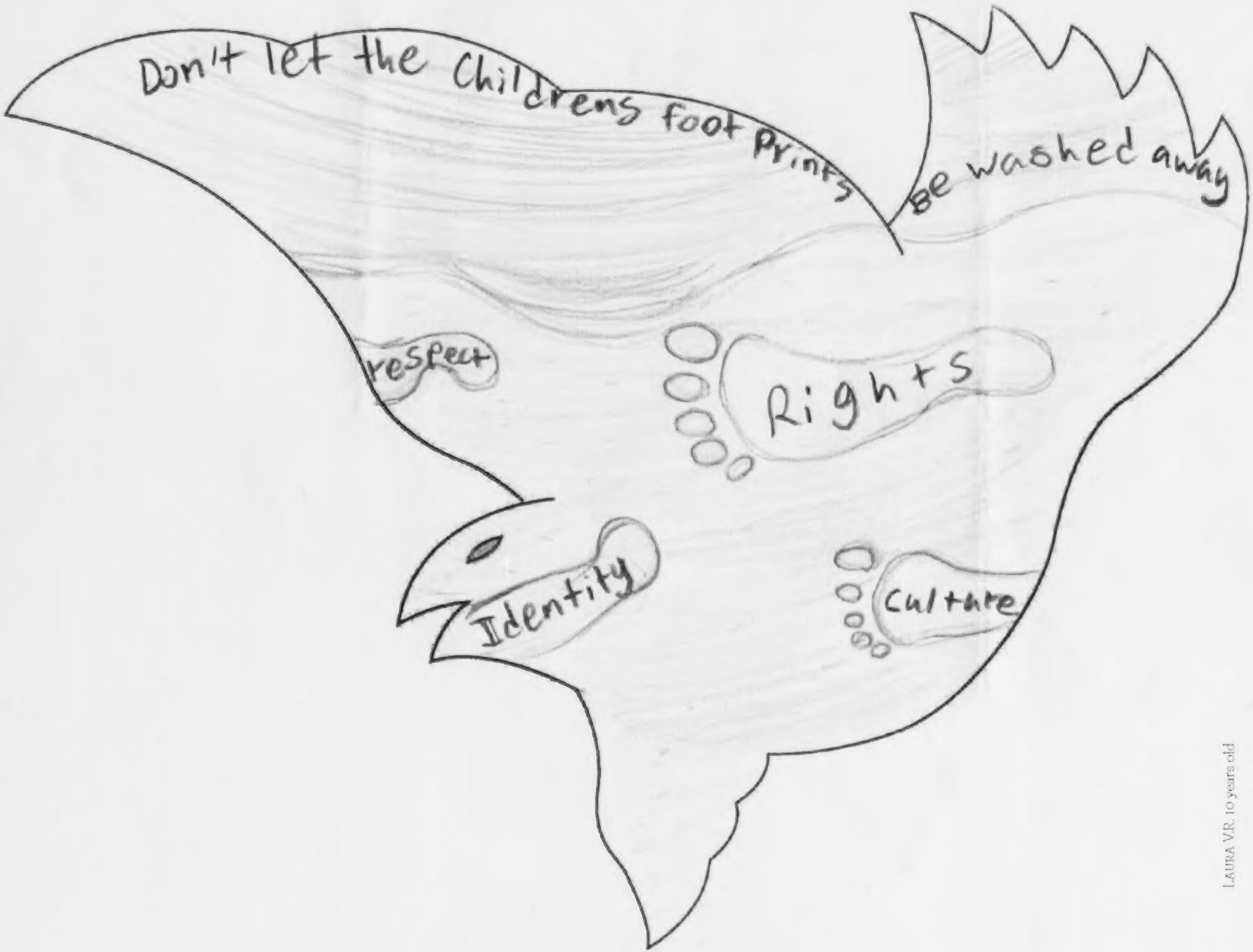
COLBY M. 20 years old

Article 23

Children who have any kind of disability should receive special care and support so that they can live a full and independent life.

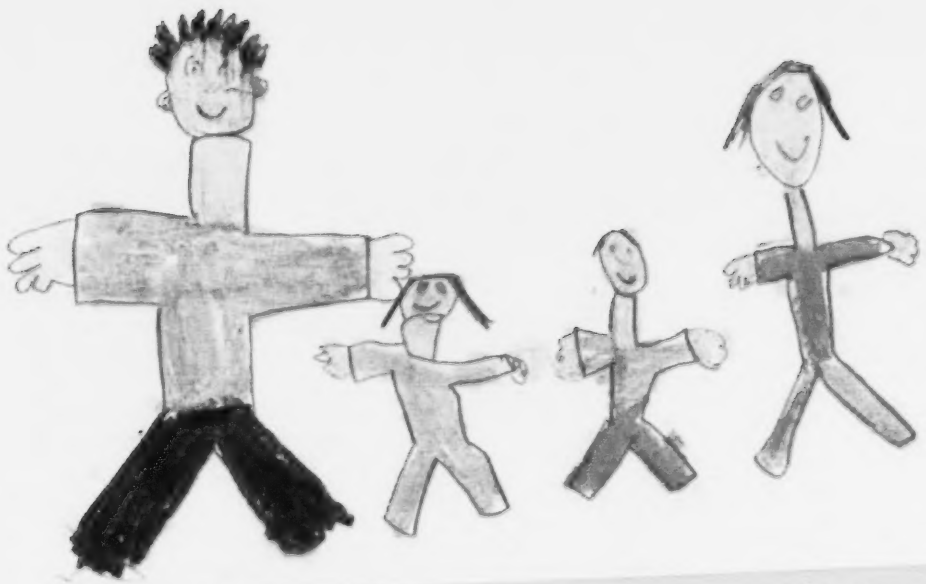
Article 24

Children have the right to good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that they will stay healthy. Richer countries should help poorer countries achieve this.



LAURA VR. 10 years old

I have the right to have a family.



MADELINE P.G. 6 years old

WAHNITA W. 11 years old

Article 25

Children who are looked after by their local authority rather than their parents should have their situation reviewed regularly.

Article 26

The Government should provide extra money for the children of families in need.

Article 27

Children have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. The government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.

I want every kid to be able to enjoy a soccer game with their friends. I want every kid to feel safe in their own homes. I want every kid to go to school. I want kids to be HEARD!

MARK A. 12 years old

WINNER

MICHELLE K. 17 years old

SORCHA D. 16 years old

> When everything is taken from someone, you begin to see everything that is taken for granted. We need to truly appreciate our rights as a whole community.

AUSTIN G. 17 years old

Article 28

Children have the right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthier countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 29

Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, their cultures and other cultures.

NOEL D. 18 years old

WINNER

SAMANTHA L. 11 years old

NILES M.P. 6 years old

Article 30

Children have the right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live, as long as this does not harm others.

Article 31

Children have the right to relax, play and to join in a wide range of leisure activities.

"Rights are important because they are an entitlement, not earned. Rights are especially important to kids in care because they don't always have parents that really love and care for them, but they always have their rights."

RYAN S. 17 years old

RAQUELLE Q. 9 years old

> Human rights are to believe in something and keep fighting for it. Fighting for rights is a great thing.
>
> ZACH N. 12 years old

Article 32

Governments should protect children from work that is dangerous or that might harm their health or education.

Article 33

Governments should provide ways of protecting children from dangerous drugs.

REBECCA K. 9 years old

SOPHIA H. 6 years old

"The right to an education means being able to go to school and not have to work. If you don't go to school, eventually you won't know what to do with your life and you won't know what rights you have."

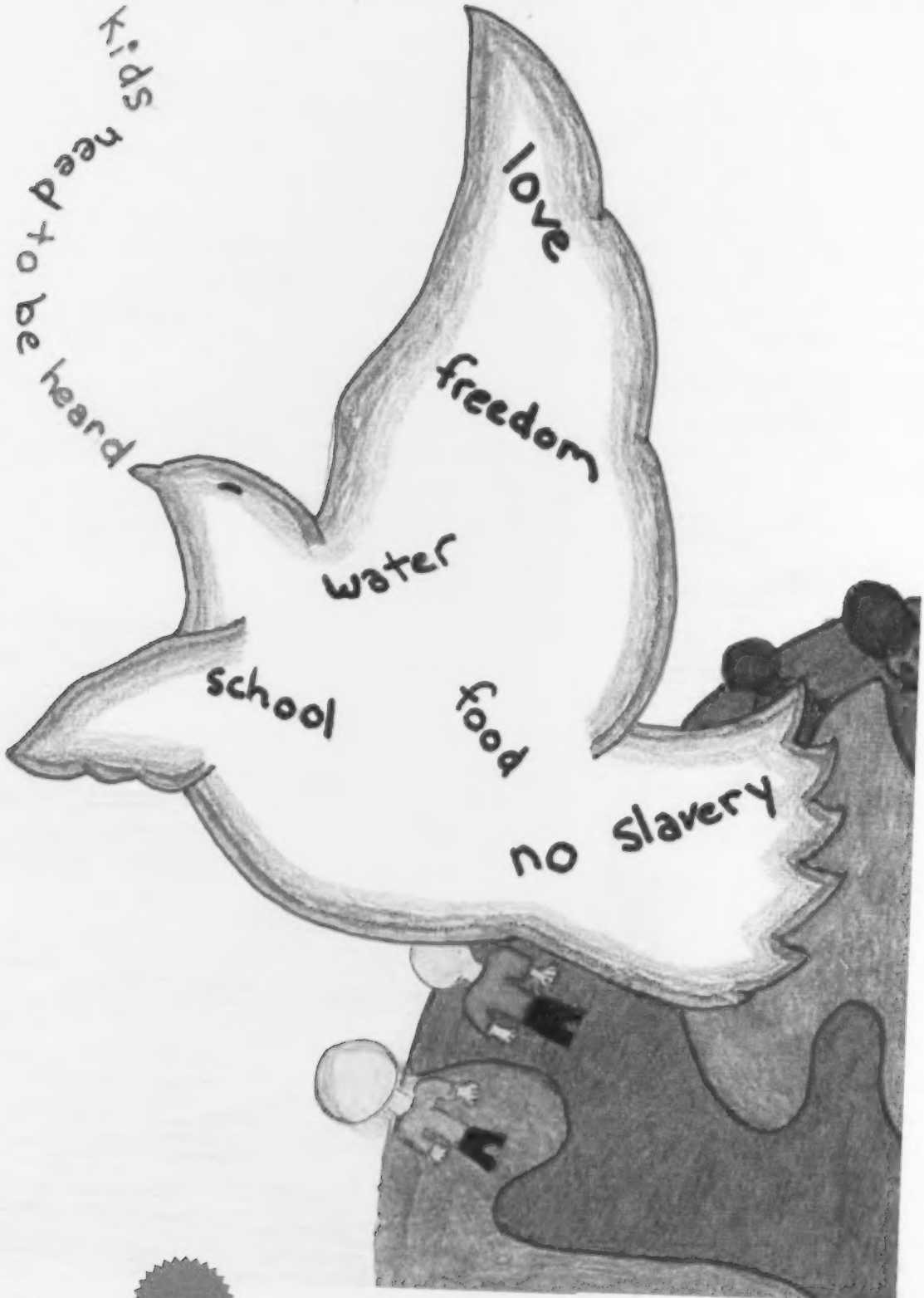
JILLIAN S. 9 years old

Article 34

Governments should protect children from sexual abuse.

Article 35

Governments should make sure that children are not abducted or sold.



SHARLA B. 10 years old

WINNER

SYDNEY J. 10 years old

"I like that we have the right to have our own country and everyone has their own culture. I am happy that I have all these rights where I live."

LEXI E. 7 years old

Article 36

Children should be protected from any activities that could harm their development.

Article 37

Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly. They should not be put in a prison with adults and should be able to keep in contact with their family.

SYLVIA H. 9 years old

VAYEN N 9. years old

VERONICA R. 11 years old

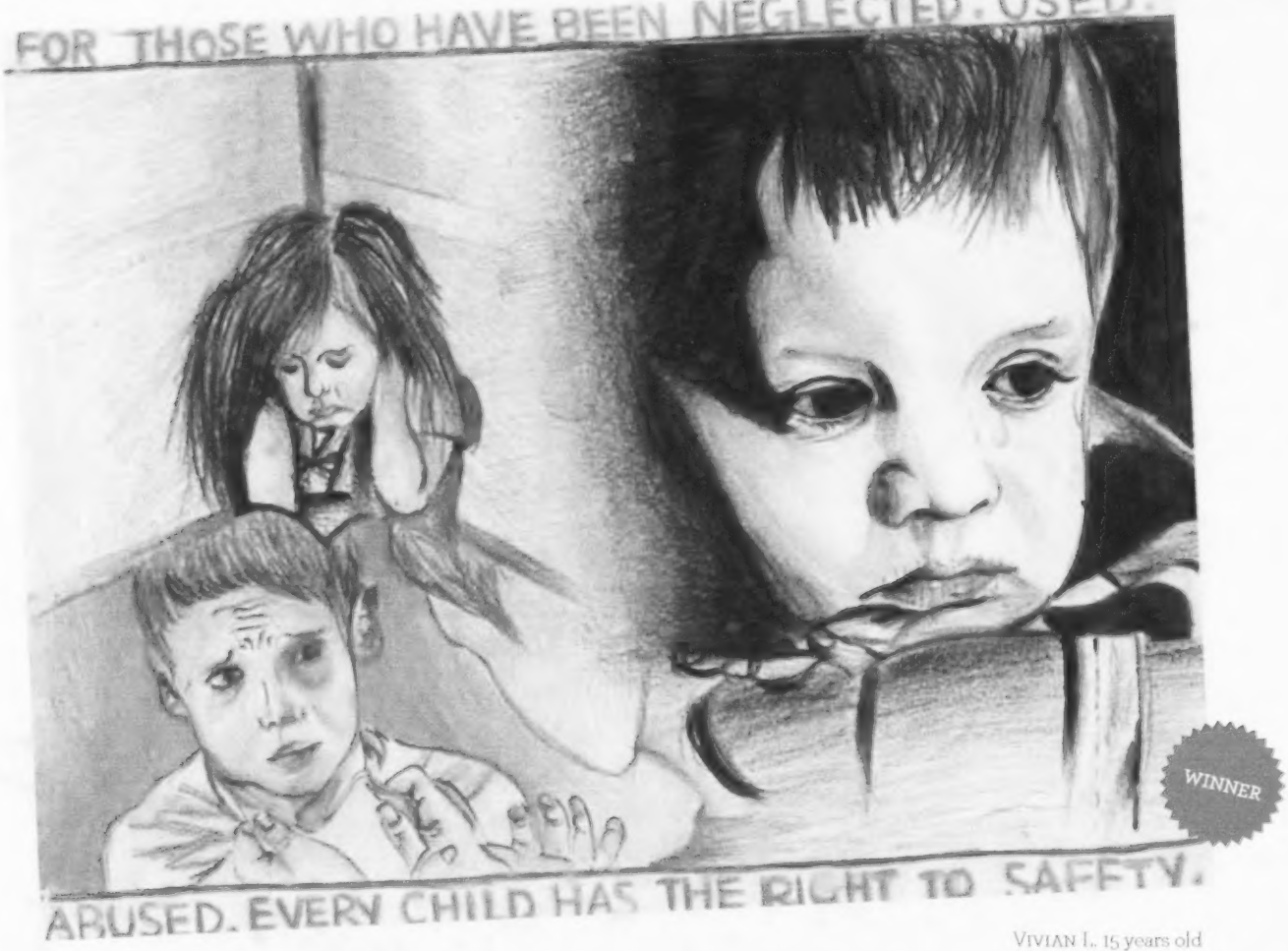
Article 38

Governments should not allow children under 15 to join the army. Children in war zones should receive special protection.

Article 39

Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect.

> Having these rights in our country makes me feel safer.
>
> CALLE E. 10 years old



VIVIAN L., 15 years old

Article 40

Children who are accused of breaking the law should receive legal help. Prison sentences for children should only be used for the most serious offences.

Article 41

If the laws of a particular country protects children better than the articles of the Convention, then those laws should override the Convention.

Article 42

Governments should make the Convention known to all parents and children.